

## THE ENSENADA CADASTRE AND THE GEOGRAPHIC DICTIONARY

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For years, at least throughout the eighteenth century, the huge pile of cadastral documentation for the intended introduction of the Single Tax was an inchoate archive. Despite the increasingly remote possibilities of its fiscal application, the purpose for which it had been conceived, its reputation and prestige as a property register, a census, a survey of wealth, an inventory of possessions or a source of a wide range of geographical, legal and economic information grew and grew until it became a kind of statistical bible which was indispensable as a source of reference. This accounts for the frequent quotation of cadastral facts and figures in connection with extremely different situations and problems of a varying nature which bore no relation to tax collection.

In our view, a case in point is the use made of the Ensenada Cadastre General Answers in the preparation of another emblematic work of eighteenth-century Spain and, as such, likewise thwarted. We are referring to the Geographic Dictionary of the Royal Academy of History (*Real Academia de la Historia*), of which only two volumes were finally published in the early nineteenth century, followed by a third about 50 years later. Thus, both the dictionary and the cadastre as reflections of one and the same spirit, anxious for reform and an improved knowledge of the milieu and society, were fused in the hopes and intentions of an enlightened few who masterminded the two schemes.

### THE GEOGRAPHIC DICTIONARIES OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT

The original, albeit not the sole purpose of the cadastre was of a fiscal nature. One of the fortunate, indirect consequences of the painstaking enquiries carried out to this end was that, perhaps for the first time in history, the State had at its disposal a true and fair view of the land, people and wealth of the Castiles. Moreover, this eagerness to acquire knowledge of the territory and have it "registered" as an indispensable condition for it to be used to advantage or transformed is also noticeable in many other tendencies peculiar to the century. In particular, it fostered the need felt in a number of different countries, including Spain, to gather as much information as possible about towns, people and territories with a view to proceeding subsequently to the publication of a geographic dictionary, very much in the spirit of a century characterised by an overriding interest in producing encyclopaedias.

The idea of a geographic dictionary was by no means new. It goes back as far as two centuries previous, when Ortelius published his famous *Thesaurus geographicus* (1598), a magnum opus consisting of a glossary of a vast number of place

names so as to facilitate their identification and study. At this stage, however, the Thesaurus was not, strictly speaking, a geographic dictionary in that its focus was almost exclusively toponymic, born of the concern on the part of grammarians and philologists to order, file and set in alphabetical order the greatest number possible of words and concepts. For a long time, these people would be most assiduous users of this instrument of compilation and erudition, indispensable for the correct application and study of language. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that this should have been the first task the Royal Spanish Academy (*Real Academia Española*) set itself not long after it was founded; or that the Academy of History should have followed suit by preparing a Universal Historical-Critical Dictionary of Spain. The aim of this work was to gather complete information about the country's history, entailing, amongst other groundwork, the tracing of a good number of maps and the collection of as much information as possible about the cities, places and other geographical features of our peninsula. Unfortunately, there was a lack of both. Concern about the absence of a cartography suited to the new needs of the Enlightened Monarchy was expressed with great clarity by the Marquis of Ensenada in his famous address to Fernando VI in 1751. The upshot of this was that a young man by the name of Tomás López received a scholarship to study in Paris. New additions (*noticias*) to geographical knowledge, about places and features of the peninsula, were as scattered as they were scarce and the aim was to improve this state of affairs by consulting two main sources: on the one hand, treatises and geographical works in general, including existing dictionaries; and, on the other, registers, censuses and a range of references available in various archives.

We stated above that dictionaries and geographic encyclopaedias in general were publications prior to the eighteenth century, but it was not until that century that, in the thirst for erudition characteristic of the time, along with an eagerness to produce encyclopaedias, their use became more widespread. According to Capel (1981), several geographic dictionaries were in circulation during this period. In Europe, the best-known, most highly-regarded dictionary was the one by Bruzen de la Martinière, the first edition of which was published in The Hague in the years from 1726 to 1739. However, probably because it was never translated, it was used little in this country, despite the fact that the author held the title of *Géographe de Sa Majesté Catholique Philippe V, Roi des Espagnes et des Indes* and exchanged interesting correspondence with several members of the Academy of History concerning the subject matter of his dictionary. We shall refer to this correspondence later.

In 1730, a learned man from Cádiz, José de Miravell y Casademonte, undertook the translation of Luis Moreri's great geographic dictionary, which, by then, had already been translated into most of the European languages. Although, in the initial stages, work progressed slowly, things improved after 1737, when Miravell was appointed Member of the Academy of History. Nevertheless, the Spanish edition did not actually appear until 1753 and, despite the translator's efforts, it remained a limited

work as far as the geography of Spain was concerned. Greater success was enjoyed by the translation into Spanish of another of the period's classic dictionaries, the one by the English clergyman, Laurence Echard, which first appeared in 1691 and was later translated into several languages. In the form of a short handbook which was far easier to use than the unwieldy dictionaries, several editions of it were published in Spanish. The first three were made under the supervision of Juan de La Serna, while the fourth and final one was produced by Antonio Capmany y Montpalau, who introduced great improvements into the sections referring to Spain. Other, similar works dealing with universal, Spanish and American geography could be quoted, such as Alcedo's Dictionary (Capel, 1981: 23). This, however, is not our purpose.

#### The Geographic Dictionary of the Royal Academy of History

The above references are significant enough in that, in addition to constituting the period's most representative dictionaries, they may, to a certain extent, be linked to the Academy of History, whose unfinished dictionary and its connection with the cadastre are the matters which concern us here. At this point, we might recall the words of academicians Guevara when, in 1785, he was asked by the academy to give an opinion as to the practical value of the Geographic Dictionary, which was then at the preparation stage: "All compilations of this nature, like the works of Martinière, Moreri, the encyclopaedias and so on have, in the course of time, improved greatly." Later, he would go on to say: "Although Martinière's Geographic Dictionary leaves much to be desired, it should be kept to hand, not only to avoid committing the same mistakes but also because, despite its short comings, it is an extremely scholarly work (...) To my mind, the academy would be well-advised to acquire it without further ado." Nonetheless, the connection between La Martinière's dictionary and the Academy of History goes back a lot further than this. We know that, in 1742, the author approached the academy to ask it to appraise and correct his work, which had been published just three years before. At the time, the academy itself was but a few years old. By all accounts, the renowned geographer made this request on hearing that his work had been criticised by one or two academicians. On March 2 1742, he received the official answer, written by academicians Miguel Muñoz, to the effect that, unfortunately, La Martinière's wishes could not be fulfilled on the grounds that any criticism of his dictionary, which, as we learn from the letter, was then in the Royal Library (*Biblioteca Real*), had not been expressed explicitly. Muñoz does, however, slip in a few tactful sentences that hint at the probable cause for criticism: the lifetime of just one man can in no way suffice to visit, study and describe so many provinces except in a highly superficial way. He ends with a general reflection which leaves no doubt as to the opinion of the period's academicians and intellectuals about the need for greater knowledge of Spain's geography and the need for a dictionary on the subject: "Mindful of the lack of writers, especially of Spanish nationality, and the misleading reports and envy of foreigners (...) the academy, founded on the

instructions of our all-powerful monarch, seeks to take steps to repair the damage. However, as it has only recently come into existence, its purpose may be achieved only through time and effort. Accordingly, the academy is not in a position to attend to the particular details of your dictionary until it has established suitable rules to govern works of a general nature and the *Apparatus Criticus* on which you are now engaged."

In view of this, it is hardly surprising that, at around the same time, the academy should open its doors to the above-mentioned Miravell y Casademonte, who was responsible for the translation and adaptation of Moreri's dictionary, a task in which he had always received the academy's support. Similarly, years later, another scholar of established repute, Antonio de Capmany, a member of the academy since 1776 and permanent secretary since 1790, would undertake the task of adapting Echard's dictionary, translated by La Serna, as observed above. All these references, together with a number of relevant developments which might be taken into account, mirror the academy's firm intention and concern regarding the preparation of a geographic dictionary of Spain, for which purpose it was able to count on the contributions of some of its members, first-class geographers and historians who shared an interest in the subject. In actual fact, it was not just an intention but a fundamental requirement for the fulfilment of one of its foundational aims. Hindered in this endeavour by a variety of stumbling blocks, the members engaged in the task would become utterly obsessed with it. In the final analysis, the very few volumes published bear witness to the meagre fruits of their labours and to the frustration which, yet again, beset one of Spain's great scientific projects of the eighteenth century. Nonetheless, this does not detract from the importance of the process followed and the method used. We have already pointed out that the overriding aim was not a geographic but a historical-critical dictionary, of a much broader and more ambitious scope, requiring a mass of groundwork. The work, conceived not long after the academy was founded, was given top priority over the academy's other tasks and virtually exclusive attention. In the early stages, it was resolved that, for the purposes of a correct understanding, the Historical-Critical Dictionary should be preceded by an *Apparatus Criticus* which would include the different ancillary subjects necessary for a historical knowledge of Spain, including topics of a geographic and cartographic nature (Manso, 2001). And so the initial idea was born and then nurtured by a number of academy members, who set about gathering new topographic, cartographic and geographical information concerning the country. Before long, however, problems would arise, such as the lack of means and maps or the confusion existing between what was then termed as Ancient Geography and Modern Geography and so on. All this hampered the practical application of what had been an enormous effort, while the initial plan slowly sank into oblivion (*Noticia*, 1796: XXIV, XXV). The initial plan was resumed in 1766, when academicians Juan Manuel de la Parra submitted to

the board of governors a project to convert the geographic index of the original *Apparatus Criticus* into an independent dictionary. Backing his project with over 10,000 geographic entries, he received immediate approval. There seems to have been yet another outburst of interest and enthusiasm: glossaries of towns and places were made, assistance was obtained, a wide range of information was gathered and the work was shared out among the academy's members. For all that, little headway was made until Campomanes, then the director of the academy, gave the project a much-needed boost by issuing the *Instrucción* of 1772, establishing the direction and organisation of the task in hand. Campomanes also played a key role by assisting the academy in the consultation and collection of documents which can only have been fundamental in the preparation of the dictionary: *Libro de las Behetrías*, the Topographic Glossary of Felipe II, the Censuses of the town of Aranda, Floridablanca and Godoy, the answers and maps of Tomás López and Tofiño, etc., and, above all, the Ensenada Cadastre General Answers; not to mention the acquisition of books, treatises and dictionaries, which increased the academy library's stocks considerably. All this activity is summarised in a brief but significant reference in the dictionary's prologue, written by Abella, one of the academy members: "This occurred in the year of 1772 and, from that time onwards, the academy put all its effort into collecting whatsoever new additions and documents that might be relevant. The Secretariat of the Tax Office gave the academy permission to borrow the documents and case papers drafted in 1753 for the Single Tax and copies of the topographic glossaries of some of the towns in Spain, prepared, as stated above, in the times of Felipe II." (Dictionary, 1802: XXII). It could almost be said that, thanks to the project of the Geographic Dictionary and the impulse and direction afforded by Campomanes, the academy became a fully-fledged institution, a true corporation at the public service of the country and the Crown (*Noticia*, 1796: LXXII et seq.).

The difficulties, however, were of a methodological nature. The academicians were swamped by the huge piles of documents and at a loss for want of a method for their classification and use. To overcome this, in 1792, the Geography Room (*Sala de Geografía*) was founded, unfortunately with little success. At the same time, there were serious conceptual problems as to how the articles should be worded and what to include or omit. The introduction of a set of procedural rules achieved but little as many of them were contradictory. It was then decided to request the dictum of leading academicians, such as Jovellanos, Guevara and Campomanes himself, all of whom issued successive reports expressing their opinions and a number of interesting reflections on the ends and objectives of the dictionary and the subject of geography. This approach likewise seems to have done little towards speeding up the process. Although, quite possibly, things could not have been otherwise, too much time was lost. When, in 1802, the first volumes of the long-awaited work, concerning the Basque Country and Navarra, finally appeared, political circumstances heralded a gap in history which would lead to the total abandonment

of the dictionary. Not until 1846 could Casimiro de Govantes publish the third volume, about La Rioja, in an attempt to resume the work. It was, however, too late. The dictionaries of Sebastián de Miñano and Pascual Madoz had already proved the effectiveness of other methods, setting the course of the new era.

### ENSENADA'S CADASTRE AT THE ACADEMY

At the beginning of this paper, we spoke of the high regard in which the scholars of the second half of the eighteenth century are thought to have held Ensenada's Cadastre. The same is probably true of the academicians in charge of preparing the Geographic Dictionary, if we bear in mind Abella's words in the prologue to this work: "For the purpose of providing a civil [description of Spain], new additions may be made from the surveys of all the pieces of land in each village commissioned by the king with a view to establishing the rates for the Single Tax under the Crown of Castile. The surveys may also be used to reflect, by means of geometric figures, the estate of the inhabitants, along with the value and capacity of the areas involved, in accordance, in fact, with the procedure followed in these documents." (Dictionary, 1802: XVI). In light of this, it stands to reason that the next step should have been to consider the possibility of using this information in the preparation of the dictionary, a work which was, as we have seen, originally conceived prior to the cadastre's being carried out. Nevertheless, there is no written proof of this until 1766, with the project of Juan Manuel de la Parra: "in May 1766 (...) it was resolved to consult His Majesty and request the new addition on towns covered by the Single Tax operation, or cadastre, performed in 1753 in the provinces under the Crown of Castile." (*Noticia*, 1796: LXXII). Even so, as pointed out previously, it was not until 1772 and the intervention of Campomanes that the process was set under way. The problems and circumstances surrounding the enterprise were recorded in the academy's archives. Capel (1981: 27) attributes the delay to reasons of a political nature: the opposition of Aranda's followers to the projects of the *Golillas*, the party of Campomanes and Floridablanca. While this possibility may not be ruled out, it is more than likely that it all came down to a question of technical problems and that any opposition came from elsewhere on account of the volume and scope of the consultation requested. On this point, it should be taken into account that, throughout the eighteenth century and most of the nineteenth, cadastral documentation was considered as an inchoate archive and, as such, the consultation and usage of its documents were restricted. By way of example, we might mention the fact that, in 1833, at the time of the provincial reorganisation of Javier de Burgos, the cadastral documentation stored in the capital cities of the former *intendencias* was, when the administrative reform entailed a change of capital city, transferred to the capitals of the nine provinces. Despite the fact that the royal authorisation whereby the academy was allowed to make its consultations was signed by Miguel de Múzquiz, the then-Secretary of the Treasury, on March 5 1772, the academy was not officially notified to the effect until

one year later, on August 17 1773. The notification came in the form of a copy signed by Pedro Núñez de Amézaga, secretary of what was known as the Second Board of the Single Tax, and the event was recorded a few years later in the aforementioned *Noticia*: “[In March 1772] the Secretariat of the Tax Office received a Royal Order to furnish the academy with whatsoever new additions it might require to take from the documents and case papers pertinent to the Single Tax and use them in the preparation of the dictionary (...). In August 1773, the Secretary of the Single Tax Tribunal received a Royal Order via the Ministry of Finance to allow the academy access to the documents and case papers connected with the Single Tax operation for their use in improving the accuracy and quality of the dictionary. For this purpose, the dictum, formulated by four of the academy’s committee members, was read. It concerned the new additions which it was deemed fitting to copy from the books of General Answers deriving from the operation and also the manner in which such new additions should be extracted and ordered. This was an overwhelming, painstaking task on account of the repetitious, tedious method used in the arrangement of the information.” (*Noticia*, 1796: LXXIV et seq.).

This brief note contains a description of the entire process and the main problems involved. Several academicians took part: Núñez, the Marquis of Lorca, Hermosilla, Guevara, Sánchez, Subirtas and the secretary, Pedro Miguel de Flores. It was these committee members who were faced with settling two major issues: the type of information to be used and how to go about it. A reading of the minutes of the academy’s sessions and of the simultaneous correspondence between its members and the tax officials shows that, at first, the academicians were none too clear about which parts of the cadastre they could use. Moderating their requests regarding the General Answers, whose value as a way of enhancing the dictionary’s articles, appearing in the preliminary section under Letter A, was unquestionable, they decided to find out if any of the others comprised by each province could prove equally useful.

From the words of the secretary, Miguel de Flores, it would appear that the academy members also felt tempted to draw upon other documentation: “Mr. Núñez de Amézaga offered to pass on to me the notebooks on the neighbourhoods corresponding to the Books of General Answers which had come into my possession and also a book of items transferred from the Public Treasury in one of the provinces. Fortunately, however, they did not do so because the General Answers already posed enough problems, and these would have been impossible to solve had more information been collected. It would seem that, at the most, they used the information on neighbourhoods as this matter was addressed at the meeting of September 7 1775. In fact, Campomanes read the results relating to Asturias, which he himself had dealt with and prepared.” With regard to this matter, there is proof at the Simancas Archive that a copy of the General Neighbourhood Ledger was sent to Campomanes at the Academy of History, doubtless for the preparation of the dictionary, as indicated in the above-mentioned information.

However, at the present time, copies of the

neighbourhood notebooks of only a few provinces exist at the library of the Simancas Archive (Camarero and Campos, 1991: XCVI). It was clear that not all the answers, which, when all is said and done, were replies to a questionnaire undertaken for tax purposes, had the same value as a source of geographical information. Hence, the copy of useful information must not be verbatim, as it appeared in the General Answers, but by extracting the essence of what might be suitable for use in the dictionary. The question was: how could this be done? As an initial step, it was resolved to prepare sample entries, the first of which corresponded to Arcos de la Frontera, concerning different places and features of varying condition and size: city, town, hamlet, depopulated areas, so as to devise an approach with greater ease and accuracy. But this also failed to produce an effective method, for, as the above *Noticia Histórica* tells us: “The following September, a selection of the topographic entries to be drawn from the aforementioned books was made; i.e., the entries which were to act as the standard and model for the rest, with a number of remarks suggesting improvements. These remarks were formulated after a series of debates. The Quartermasters’ Ordinance of 1749 and the Questionnaire of the General Answers were studied; the idea of linking it up with the *Instrucción* which Campomanes had drafted for the dictionary in 1772 was tried; several commissions were appointed and each academician drew up a list of considerations, but the result was more confusing than ever. Thus, initially, it was resolved, amongst other measures, not to use Answers numbers 5, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 25, 26, 27, 28, 31, 32, 34, 37 and 40, but, in 1777, academy member Barrio suggested the omission of numbers 10, 23, 24, 33, 35 and 36 in their entirety and also part of number 16, which was tantamount to a total disparity of criteria. However, at the same time, one of the many commissions engaged in the study of these subjects, the one formed by censor Father Concepción, Father Marín, Capmany and the secretary, submitted the following conclusions to the board meeting held on May 9 1777: “Although, for the time being, there would appear to be no reason to include certain new additions in the articles of a geographic dictionary, they may prove useful for others of the Academy’s ends, uses and purposes.” The only objection raised concerns Question 21, the one about the number of inhabitants, possibly because, by then, the information contained in the Neighbourhood Ledger was known to be more accurate than that contained in the Answers.”

An examination of the other remarks shows how difficult the matter had become and, at the same time, how complex any solution would be. Great care was taken to ensure the physical uniformity of the extracts: one sheet or half a sheet, depending on the space taken up by the information; the sheet was folded, with the name at the top, margins for annotations, quotations from the original documents and so on, and up to 13 considerations.

Moreover, the purpose of the remarks was to complete the content of the answers, giving them a more geographical focus, with four more rules, or additions, relating above all to demographic data, to the kinds of crop and land measurements, to the

inclusion of tithes, the type of feudal estate and the position and size of the municipal areas occupied by each village or place: "When referring to the situation of the villages, distances should be stated in accordance with the points of the compass: first north, then south and then from east to west" and so on.

In any event, as these tasks were far from easy, a feeling of despondence probably set in as progress towards the achievement of the end in view grew slower and slower. As early as 1775, Campomanes had expressed his concern about this and had ordered the preparation of a list specifying the academicians' working hours and obligations. As stated in the *Noticia* included in his account: "In January 1778, it was resolved to establish a weekly session for the reading of the entries taken from the Single Tax Books. In recent times, this reading had become somewhat irregular."

Added to this, problems arose with the tax officials as regards the guarantees and frequency of the loans of cadastral documentation. Because of the size and importance of this documentation, it was established that the two secretaries, the one from the Single Tax Board, Núñez de Amézaga, and the one from the academy, Flores, should hold a consultation. This cannot have proved easy, bearing in mind the disparity of criteria as to what such a consultation should consist of. It would seem that, initially, the idea of copying the books had not been considered. They were simply taken to the academy, where each member, bearing the appropriate receipt, would go to the secretariat and make an extract of the new additions he needed to prepare his section of the dictionary's entries. This system was similar to the one established in the same period for the use of data collected in Aranda's Census. As we know, this census was also used by the academy as a source of information for the Geographic Dictionary. In this case, the method used was recorded in great detail in the academy's minutes: "His Excellency (Aranda) kindly suggested that information for the academy's secretariat be extracted, in sections, from his own secretariat through a procedure of receipts extended by the secretary and the return of one set of documents in exchange for receiving another so that the academy may have them copied (...) it shall be determined whether it is preferable to copy them or to make an extract from them so that they may be used to greater advantage and returned at the earliest opportunity."

Unfortunately, as the General Answers were far more voluminous and complex than the famous Count's census, the roster of loans, consultations and returns must surely have become a slow, tedious process. In fact, on November 17 1775, just over two years after the commencement of the consultation, Julián de Pinedo y Salazar, who had taken over at the Secretariat of the Single Tax Board when Pedro Núñez de Amézaga fell ill, expressed his disconcertment to the former that the academy should take so long to return the Books of General Answers. Some of these books, listed by the secretary in his missive, had been at the academy's secretariat for more than two years, during which time they had been needed for the preparation of new additions requested by the supervisors. In consideration of this

and the risk of deterioration or loss, he requested confirmation of the Royal Order for the process to be continued. According to Pinedo, the books retained by the academy were as follows:

- Province of Burgos: District of Castrogeriz, 1, 2, 3. District of Laredo, 2 and 3.
- Province of Extremadura: 5 and 6.
- Province of Granada: 1, 3, 4 and 5.
- Province of León: 1. District of Asturias, 1. District of Ponferrada, 2 and 3.
- Province of La Mancha: 4 and 5.
- Province of Toledo: 1 and 2.

Despite all that had happened and the number of books retained for so long (19 volumes of General Answers), the confirmation requested by Pinedo came on December 5 of the same year, again from Múzquiz, which clearly shows the Crown's interest in the academy's dictionary and, of course, the influence exerted by Campomanes.

Furthermore, Campomanes must have taken appropriate steps at the institution of which he was then the director for, from then on, the system of loans and returns started to move faster. By that time (1777), a synoptic model for the treatment of cadastral documentation had been designed. It was Campomanes' intention that one *real* should be paid to the clerks engaged in the task for each entry extracted, as a way of speeding up the process and making it more rewarding. However, by all accounts, this was not possible because the academy's budget was unable to cover the expense.

Be that as it may, according to the *Noticia Histórica*, by mid-1782: "the Academy had had access to and made extracts from the 514 volumes of the Single Tax General Answers, pertaining to the 22 provinces under the Crown of Castile." From the same source, we learn that the academicians took another two years to set this documentation in order: "By June 1785, the extracts from the lists of the Single Tax had been completed and ordered." At the present time, this documentation amounts to 64 bundles of new additions and extracts concerning each village. All of it should have been used in the preparation of the Academy of History's great project: the Geographic Dictionary.

As things turned out, this was not so. Seven years after the last date quoted, the only two volumes of this unfinished work were published and only a negligible part of the cadastral documentation had been used in their preparation. The rest of the extracts remain in the possession of the Academy of History like a silent witness not only of the manifold problems besetting the project but also of the fatality, which, as in the case of the cadastre, thwarted the ultimate aim of such a major work in the Spanish Enlightenment.